

What is claimed is:

1. A financial services outsourcing method for facilitating a direct service provider's outsourcing of financial services for numerous ultimate clients, the financial services being outsourced to an outsourcing group abroad, the method comprising:

For plural respective direct service providers, loading, onto a remotely accessible part of a common host server located in the United States, ultimate client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials, the host server providing access to a remote computer client of information concerning the ultimate client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials;

retaining outsourced personnel to perform financial service projects for ultimate clients of the financial services firms, the outsourced personnel performing the financial service projects while located outside the United States;

providing the outsourced personnel limited access to the server;

the outsourced personnel performing the financial service project through a remote limited access client located outside the United States connected to the host server; and

monitoring and reporting the status of the financial service project.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the financial services comprise tax return preparation services.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the tax return preparation services comprise individual tax return preparation services.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the financial services are outsourced through an intermediary firm to the outsourced personnel.

5. The method according to claim 3, wherein the financial services are outsourced through an intermediary firm to the outsourced personnel.

6. The method according to claim 4, further comprising an intermediary service firm interacting with the outsourced personnel through use of a servicing computer system, and interacting with the plural direct service providers through use of the servicing computer system.

7. The method according to claim 5, further comprising an intermediary service firm interacting with the outsourced personnel through use of a servicing computer system, and interacting with the plural direct service providers through use of the servicing computer system.

8. The method according to claim 3, wherein the direct service providers comprise CPA firms.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the host server provides limited screen shot access to the remote client computer of information concerning the ultimate client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the host server comprises a CITRIX server.

11. The method according to claim 2, wherein the host server provides limited screen shot access to the remote client computer of information concerning the ultimate clients specific financial files and corresponding reference materials.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the host server comprises a CITRIX server.
13. The method according to claim 3, wherein the host server provides limited screen shot access to the remote client computer of information concerning the ultimate client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials.
14. The method according to claim 13, wherein the host server comprises a CITRIX server.
15. The method according to claim 1, wherein the host server comprises an ASP server running tax software for use by plural independent direct service providers provided with access to the ASP server.
16. The method according claim 2, wherein the host server comprises an ASP server running tax software for use by plural independent direct service providers provided with access to the ASP server.
17. The method according to claim 3, wherein the host server comprises an ASP server running tax software for use by plural independent direct service providers provided with access to the ASP server.
18. The method according to claim 1, wherein the corresponding reference materials comprise image files of physical reference materials.
19. The method according to claim 1, wherein the ultimate client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials comprise tax filer specific tax files and image files.

20. The method according to claim 19, further comprising loading onto the remotely accessible part of the host server tax preparation software.

21. The method according to claim 1, wherein the outsourced personnel perform the financial service projects while located in India.

22. The method according to claim 1, further comprising a given direct service provider interviewing a tax filer and obtaining supporting documentation for the tax filer's tax return.

23. The method according claim 22, wherein the direct service provider comprises a CPA firm.

24. The method according to claim 23, wherein the supporting documentation comprises the last season tax return as filed, receipts, and summary information regarding finances of the tax filer.

25. The method according to claim 24, further comprising the given direct service provider setting up a tax file compatible with a given tax software package, and rendering the supporting documentation electronic.

26. The method according to claim 25, wherein rendering the supporting documentation electronic comprises scanning supporting documents into image files.

27. The method according to claim 26, wherein the image files comprise TIFF or PDF files.

28. The method according to claim 1, wherein the access to the host server via the Internet.

29. The method according to claim 1, wherein the access to the host server is via a connection-oriented end point to end point high bandwidth transmission line.

30. The method according to claim 1, wherein the access to the host server is via a DSL/T1 line.

31. The method according to claim 1, wherein the monitoring and reporting occurs to the outsourced personnel and to the direct service provider.

32. The method according to claim 31, wherein the financial service project comprises a tax return preparation .

33. The method according to claim 31, wherein the monitoring and reporting are performed using a web-tracking server accessible by the outsourced personnel and by the direct service provider.

34. The method according to claim 32, wherein the status information monitored and reported includes information concerning the status of the tax return preparation at any given point throughout the preparation.

35. The method according to claim 34, wherein the status information includes information concerning the status of the tax return preparation through completion of the return and filing of the return with the Internal Revenue Service.

36. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

an outsourcing group computer system logging status information into a monitoring and reporting system accessible by the direct service provider;

providing to the direct services provider a view of a status report produced by the monitoring and reporting system;

sending an unsolicited electronic notification being sent in response to a given status change monitored by the monitoring and reporting system; and

outsourced personnel posing questions electronically to a reviewer in the United States, and the reviewer providing answers to the questions electronically.

37. The method according to claim 36, wherein the unsolicited electronic notification comprises an email.

38. The method according to claim 36, wherein the unsolicited electronic notification is sent to the direct service provider computer system.

39. The method according to claim 37, wherein the email is sent to the direct service provider computer system.

40. The method according to claim 37, wherein the given status change comprises the completion of in take processing of a tax return.

41. The method according to claim 37, wherein the given status change comprises questions being posted by an outsourced provider regarding a tax return.

42. The method according to claim 37, wherein the given status change comprises the completion of a tax return.

43. The method according to claim 36, wherein the outsourced personnel poses questions to the reviewer by sending an email to the reviewer.

44. The method according to claim 36, wherein the outsourced personnel poses questions to the reviewer by posting questions to a web-tracking server comprising part of the monitoring and reporting system, the recipient of the questions being notified that the questions have been posted to the web-tracking server.

45. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

providing the outsourced personnel with terminal access limited to the tax file and supporting documentation via an outsourcing computer system, the outsourcing computer system comprising terminals;

each person within the outsourced group being provided access to an outsourcing group computer system terminal within a secure area, the secure area not allowing the outsourced personnel to have access to any paper, or information recordation instruments.

46. The method according to claim 1, wherein the outsourced personnel utilize terminals for accessing information on the server, the terminals providing only image information concerning the tax file and supporting documentation pertaining to a given tax return worked on by the given outsourced individual, the terminals being devoid of any detachable memory devices capable of storing data from either the internal memory or the display of the terminal and capable of being carried outside of a secure area within which the terminals are placed.

47. The method according to claim 45, wherein the outsourced personnel utilize terminals for accessing information on the server, the terminals providing only image information concerning the tax file and supporting documentation pertaining to a given tax return worked on by the given outsourced individual, the terminals being devoid of any detachable memory devices capable of storing data from either the internal memory or the display of the terminal and capable of being carried outside of a secure area within which the terminals are placed.

48. The method according to claim 1, wherein the terminals of the outsourcing group computer system provide thin client screen shot images of tax information and supporting documentation and provide a viewable user interface of tax processing software.

49. The method according to claim 45, wherein the terminals of the outsourcing group computer system provide thin client screen shot images of tax information and supporting documentation and provide a viewable user interface of tax processing software.

50. The method according to claim 47, wherein the terminals of the outsourcing group computer system provide thin client screen shot images of tax information and supporting documentation and provide a viewable user interface of tax processing software.

51. The method according to claim 1, wherein the host server comprises an application for performing tax processing.

52. The method according to claim 51, wherein the host server is controlled by the direct service provider.

53. The method according to claim 51, wherein the host server is controlled by the intermediary services firm.

54. The method according to claim 1, further comprising an ASP server comprising tax software and a web server application providing web site access to remote client computers comprising terminals of an outsourcing computer system, the terminals being provided with limited screen shot image access of tax file and tax software information.

55. The method according to claim 54, wherein the ASP server web server application is interfaced with PC anywhere or Citrix independent computing architecture technology.

56. The method according to claim 1, wherein any data being processed is retained on the hosting site, and wherein the data is not accessible at the outsourcing group computer system or at any terminals of the outsourcing group computer system.

57. A financial services outsourcing method for facilitating outsourcing of financial services for numerous clients, the financial services being outsourced to an outsourcing group abroad, the method comprising:

loading, onto a host computer system, client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials, the host computer system providing access to information concerning the client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials;

retaining outsourced personnel to perform financial service projects for clients of the financial services firms, the outsourced personnel performing the financial service projects while located outside the United States;

providing the outsourced personnel access to the host computer system;

the outsourced personnel performing the financial service project; and

a web-based and web-accessible tracking system to monitor and report status information regarding the financial service project, the status information comprising the financial service project having been submitted to the outsourced personnel for processing, questions regarding the financial service project having been posted to the web-based tracking system, and the financial service project having been completed.

58. The method according to claim 57, wherein the financial services comprise tax return preparation services.

59. The method according to claim 58, wherein the tax return preparation services comprise individual tax return preparation services.

60. The method according to claim 57, wherein the financial services are outsourced through an intermediary firm to the outsourced personnel.

61. The method according to claim 59, wherein the financial services are outsourced through an intermediary firm to the outsourced personnel.

62. The method according to claim 60, further comprising an intermediary service firm interacting with the outsourced personnel through use of a servicing computer system, and interacting with plural direct service providers serving the clients through use of the servicing computer system.

63. The method according to claim 61, further comprising an intermediary service firm interacting with the outsourced personnel through use of a servicing computer system, and interacting with plural direct service providers serving the clients through use of the servicing computer system.

64. The method according to claim 59, wherein direct service providers serving the clients comprise CPA firms.

65. The method according to claim 57, wherein the host computer system is remote from remote client computers used by the outsourced personnel, and wherein the host computer system provides limited screen shot access to the remote client computer of information concerning the client specific financial files and corresponding reference materials.

66. The method according to claim 65, wherein the host computer system comprises a CITRIX server.